A SERMON

Preached in the

Cathedral Church

OF

NORWICH:

AT THE

Primary Visitation of The Right Reverend Father in God,

JOHN,

Lord Bishop of NORWICH.

May 18. 1692.

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LONDON: Printed by *Samuel Roycroft*, for *Robert Clavell*, at the *Peacock* in S. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1692.

IMPRIMATUR,

Jul. 27. 1692.

Ra: Barker.

268:08

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2 Cor. IV. 5.

For we Preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord: and our ſelves your Servants for Jeſus ſake.

GOD is the Supream, Abſolute, and Univerſal Governour of the World; and acts as ſuch by the immediate Influences of his Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Power (*a*). Thoſe Influences have their proper and full effect (according to the Divine Will) upon

(*a*) *Salv. de gub. Dei.* Ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ βασιλεία, ἢ μοναρχικὴ ὄντως πολιτεία. *Iſid.* Ep. 123.

upon all Creatures, Animate and Inanimate; Rational and Irrational: But the Government is moſt perfect, where Rational Natures are the Subjects. Thoſe Rational Natures are Angels and Men; and among Men, thoſe who are Truly Religious, are moſt eminently Subjects of this Kingdom: And therefore the State of Religion (eſpecially in the Days of the *Meſſias*) is called the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and the *Kingdom of God* (b). That Kingdom is no other than the *Empire of Reaſon and Religion in the Souls and Lives of Men, by which* (ſo far as it prevails) *they are made Wiſe, and Good, and Happy* (c): And *the Son of God* (to whom the Father has committed all Power) *came down from Heaven, and aſſumed our Nature, and was born, and lived, and died, and roſe again, and aſcended into Heaven, and became the Author and the Pattern of the Religion and of the Happineſs of Men.* This is the glorious Doctrin of the Goſpel; and this is the True Notion of Jeſus Chriſt: This was ſincerely declared by the Apoſtles; and this is eaſie to be underſtood by all Chriſtians. Their Office, the Apoſtles were ſeparated unto, by the Son of God; and they were Qualified for it by the Divine Spirit: They performed it with all Simplicity and Faithfulneſs; and they were accompanied with Aſſurance and Succeſs. Therefore ſays S. *Paul*, Ver. 1, 2. *Seeing we have this Miniſtry, we faint not: But have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, not handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifeſtation of the Truth, commending our ſelves to every man's Conſcience, in the ſight of God.* This Doctrin the Diſciples of Chriſt were obliged to believe and profeſs: In ſuch Teachers as the Apoſtles,

(b) Vid. *Grot.* ad *Mat.* 3. 2. *Dan.* 2. 44. & 7. 13, 14.

(c) V. *Eraſm.* Paraphr. *Mat.* 4. p. 125. Jam enim inſtat Regnum cœlorum, &c. *Luc.* 22 p. 217. Nolite tale, &c. *Mat.* 20. p. 133. Illic enim qui, &c.

Apoſtles, they might intirely confide; and Nothing could hinder the Converſion of Men to Chriſtianity, but vicious Principles, and infernal Deluſion. Ver. 3, 4. *But if our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt: In whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.* Such is the Fidelity of thoſe who Preached the *Goſpel of the Kingdom*: And ſuch is the caſe of thoſe to whom it was preached. As a Mark of their Fidelity to whom the publication of this Divine Doctrin was committed, They did not aſſume unto themſelves; but aſcribe all unto Chriſt: And had no other Deſign upon Men; but to miniſter to the Converſion and Salvation of them. *For we preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and our ſelves your Servants, for Jeſus ſake.* They publiſhed the Goſpel of the Kingdom: That Jeſus Chriſt alone was the Supream Lord: That themſelves were only his Inferior Miniſters: That in ſetting up this Spiritual Kingdom in the Souls of Men, they were Servants of Chriſt, and of them. This is the great Truth I am to diſcourſe, *viz.*

That *the Son of God Incarnate, is the only Supream Lord: That the Teachers of Chriſtianity are the Inferior Miniſters of his Spiritual Kingdom.* Doctrin.

For Explication of which Truth, I ſhall give ſome Account,

1. Of the *Nature* of the *Spiritual Kingdom:*
2. Of the *Glory* of the *Supream Lord:*
3. Of the *Office* of his *Inferior Miniſters.*

1. I ſhall give an Account of the *Nature* of this *Spiritual Kingdom.*

Since the Original degeneracy of Man; there has been a gradual advancement of the State of Religion. In the firſt Ages of the World, it did ſubſiſt in diſperſed Individuals; till ſome Aſſemblies began to Call upon the Name of the Lord (*d*). Afterwards God ſet up an Empire among the Jews, peculiarly for the intereſt of Virtue; and a whole Nation profeſſed the True Religion, as they were taught by ſupernatural Revelation. The Government of that Holy Nation was a *Theocracy*; and the Laws of their Polity, as well as of their Religion, were Divine (*e*). In *alluſion* to this Sacred Empire, God foretold (unto that People) the Perfection of Religion, that ſhould be, in the Days of the *Meſſias*; under the Notion of *His Kingdom*, which ſhould be Univerſal, and that all *Kings ſhould fall down before*, *and all Nations ſerve* Meſſiah *the Prince* (f). The ſubmiſſion of all Orders and Nations of Men, to be Subjects of this Kingdom, is demonſtration that the Nature of it is *Spiritual:* For that Subjection was to be, by voluntary and chearful Conſent, as Men accept what they account their Glory. Agreeable unto this, was the Declaration of Chriſt, who diſowned all Secular Power, and ſaid, *His Kingdom was not of this World* (g); ſignifying, that it was ſuch as *GOD* had exerciſed from the beginning, but with extraordinary manifeſtation and effect. It was indeed the Empire of Religion, or the Effectual and Univerſal prevalency of it; by which, Men of all Nations, who became Chriſtians, ſhould become Like God in *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs* (h). This the *Jews* call'd *the Kingdom of*

(*d*) Gen. 4 6.

(*e*) 1 Sam. 2. 12. 8. 7. 10. 19. Judg. 8. 23.

(*f*) Pſal. 72. 1. Dan. 9. 25.

(*g*) Joh. 18. 34.

(h) Δεῖ ἂν πρὸς μὲν τελείωσιν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀληθείας ὑμῖν, καὶ ἀρετῆς. Hiero. ad v. 67. p. 290.

Heaven;

Heaven; and this the Gentiles call'd, *Philoſophy*: Which, according to *Plutarch* is the Inſtitution of a Virtuous Man (*i*). For among the *Gentiles* Religion was no ſuch thing, as it ought to have been; but rather the conſecration of Vice, than the practice of Virtue (*k*); and their Philoſophers and Lawgivers (*l*) (not their Prieſts) taught Men to Live. Hence the Chriſtians ſpeaking of our Religion, to the Capacity of the Gentiles, called it *Our Philoſophy* (m), the *Divine Philoſophy* (n), and the *Lord's Philoſophy* (o); looking upon it as the Inſtitution of a Religious Man, and that delivered in the Divine Hiſtory of the Son of God. The Doctrin of True Religion, is the Image of God in Records; and the Practice of Religion, is the Image of God in Life; and then Men are moſt properly ſubject to, when they are *Imitators of God* (p). The Perfection of Religion, is in a peculiar ſenſe, this Divine Kingdom: And as by *Baptiſm* Chriſtians take upon them, the Profeſſion of, and Obligation to it; ſo by the *Lord's Supper*, they continually ſet Him before their eyes, who is the Author and Pattern thereof. Inſtruction and Perſuaſion are the proper Means to make men Wiſe and Good; and the Addreſſes to that purpoſe are made effectual, by the Spirit of God, on the Souls of Men. Thus is the Kingdom of God ſet up in Individual Perſons; and the Society of all ſuch Perſons is the Catholic (*q*) Church; or Univerſal Kingdom of God on Earth, entituled from its Nature, *The Kingdom of Heaven*.

(i) *Plut.* de lib. Educ. *Hieroc.* Præf.

(*k*) Quid mirum ſi ab hâc gente univerſa flagitia manarunt? apud quam ipſa vitia religioſa ſunt: Eaque non modo non vitantur, verum etiam coluntur. *Lactant.* l. 1. c. 20. *Aug.* de Civ. D. lib. 2. c. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 22, 25, 26.

(*l*) Δεῖγμα δὲ ἐμμιχθὲν τῆς μὲν πολιτικῆς φιλοσοφίας οἱ ἐν κοσμῷ κείμενοι νόμοι. *Hiero.* p. 309.

(m) Προσευτίσεαν τὴν ἡμετέραν φιλοσοφίαν τῶν παρ' Ἕλλησι. *Tatian.* contra Gr. p. 166.

(n) Φιλοσοφίαν θείαν. *Juſtin M.* Ap. 1.

(o) —— Magis durus ſecularis Philoſophiæ pravitate, quam Philoſophiæ Dominicæ lenitate pacificus. *Cypr.* Ep. 11. l. 1.

(p) Eph. 5. 1. Μιμηταὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. 1 Cor. 11. 1.

(q) Act. 10. 28.

For

For as the Bleſſedneſs of Heaven, is the higheſt perfection of Religion; ſo the Religion of Chriſt has the nature of that Bleſſedneſs on Earth. Beatitude and Piety are the ſame, in the accounts of the Goſpel (*r*) and Truth it ſelf; and every Man is ſo far truly Happy, as he is truly Religious. This Inſtitution is Eternal and Divine, ſuch as continues after Death; and raiſes the Souls of Chriſtians to the ſtate of Angels. So this Kingdom of God over Men, which ſhall never end, is begun here; and as the Nature of that Kingdom is intirely Spiritual, ſo it is moſt Excellent and Glorious. The *External Polity* of this Religious State is Temporary and Secular, and is ſuch a Defence for Chriſtianity (the Spiritual Kingdom of God,) as Worldly Government is for Moral Virtue (his Natural Kingdom.) Among degenerate Chriſtians, this Secular Polity, and the Worldly Advantages of it, are their chief Deſign: Religion is made by them, ſubſervient to their Greatneſs, Wealth, and Power: Chriſtianity is made a Carnal Religion, and the State of it is made a Worldly Empire (*s*). But this Antichriſtian Cheat is not to be run down, by depriving Religion of all Secular Protection and Encouragement from Laws; but Chriſtian Conſtitutions muſt favour Piety, as the Civil Conſtitutions have favour'd *Juſtice*, (which is alſo Divine and an Eſſential part of Religion (*t*).) This then is the Nature of Chriſt's Spiritual Kingdom, The Perfection of Religion in the Souls and Lives of Men, promoted by Spiritual Means and Influences. Of this there is an External Polity, by which it is guarded againſt the Violence and Craft of *wicked and unreaſonable Men, who have not Faith:* And ſo *Kings are the Nurſing Fathers, and Queens the Nurſing Mothers of the Church*(u).

(*r*) Mat. 5. 3. &c. Ἔστω δὴ εὐδαιμονία εὐπραξία μετ' ἀρετῆς. *Ariſt.*

(*s*) Vid. *Eraſm.* Annot. ad Matt. 11. *Jugum meum ſuave*] & ad Matt. 5. *Omne malum.*]

(*t*) Jus à Jove.

(*u*) Iſ. 49. 23.

2. I

2. I am to give an account of the *Glory* of the *Supream Lord.*

The Archetypal Idea of this Spiritual Kingdom, is the Nature of God himſelf; and ſo far as God is manifeſted to Men, *his Kingdom is come among them.* But as *Plato* obſerved, the Eyes of Men are not able to bear the Rays of Divinity (*x*); and the Image of the greateſt things cannot affect Human Senſe, or deſcend to Human Capacity (*y*): Yet it is neceſſary, that there ſhould be in Men a right, and ſtable, and lively Opinion of Wiſdom and Virtue; and ſuch an Opinion is a Particle of Divinity, in whomſoever it abides (*z*). The True God provided a glorious Expedient for this, when He cauſed the Divine Λόγος (*the brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon* (a),) to aſſume the Nature of Man, and in it to perform the Works of God. This Sacred Perſon (*Conſubſtantial* (b) *to the Moſt High God,*) was Incarnate: *The Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth* (c). Thus God exhibited Himſelf to Men in the perſon of his Son, and He appeared in the Shape and Form of Man, familiarly to Men. The Human Nature of the Son of God was conſecrated into a Living Temple by his reſidence in, and Union with it: And God the Word, ſo acquainted Himſelf with Mortal men, by the Inſtrument of a Body; as *Euſebius* ſays (*d*). He demonſtrated His Divine Perfections in the uſing of our Nature, as an excellent Muſician diſcovers his Skill by uſing

(*x*) Τὰ γὰρ τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ψυχῆς ὄμματα καρτερῆν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀφορᾶντα ἀδυνατεῖ. *Plato* Soph. p. 119.

(*y*) Τοῖς δ' ἂν μεγίστοις ὄση καὶ τιμιωτάτοις, οὐκ ἔστιν εἴδωλον ἀδὲν πρὸς τὰς ἀνθρώπους ἐργασμένον ἐναργῶς. *Plato* Civil.

(*z*) Τῶν τῶν καλῶν καὶ δικαίων περὶ καὶ ἀγαθῶν, καὶ τῶν τύπις ἐναντίων ὄντως ὅταν ἀληθῆ δόξαν μετὰ βεβαιώσεως, ἐπὰν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἰσχύσῃ θεία φημὶ ἐν δαιμονίῳ γίγνεσθαι γένει. *Plato* p. 137.

(*a*) Heb. 1. 3.

(*b*) Ὁμοούσιος. Vid. *Athan.* de Syn. *Arim.* & *Sal.* Ep. p. 928, 937. *Niceph.* l. 8. c. 22.

(*c*) Joh. 1. 14.

(*d*) *Euſeb.* Orat. ad *Trie. Conſt.* c. 14.

uſing an Harp, whoſe Nature is altogether unlike and inferior to his. Such a Nature as ours (which is Rational and Material,) was fit for the Eternal Λόγος, for God the Word to ſhew Himſelf in, to Men; and when He ſhew'd himſelf, He ſhew'd the moſt High God, for He is God of God, as the Rays of the Sun are Light of Light. Therefore he ſaid, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father* (e); and, *He that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me* (f). Thus was God gloriouſly and ſenſibly manifeſted unto Men, when He came down to Men in the likeneſs of Man, and in our Nature diſcovered his own: For in Jeſus Chriſt dwelt *all the fulneſs of the Godhead Bodily* (g). And when he appeared in Human Nature, He diſcover'd Himſelf by Divine Works; and His glory was diſcloſed by his Actions. If any one look'd upon the Man Chriſt Jeſus, there was no ſenſible Glory about his Head, that might diſtinguiſh Him from Others; but there was an Intellectual Luſtre, which Wiſdom and Goodneſs adorned Him with. His Words and Deeds were ſuch, as meer Man never did exhibit; and upon his Speeches and Actions there were Marks of Divinity viſible. His Miracles were ſuch as no Power, but that of God could do; and with them He entertained and aſtoniſhed the Minds of Men, who expreſſed their Admiration, ſaying, *What manner of Man is this* (h). Beſides, theſe Miracles were all Acts of Love, and Men were affected at them, as at the obſervation of Greatneſs and Goodneſs (*i*). At the ſame time, the obliged and amazed Multitude were entertained by the Divine Reaſon, with Diſcourſes full of Wiſdom and Virtue; ſuch as were moſt worthy of God, and moſt profitable to Men (*k*). Thoſe who heard Him ſpeak ſuch Wiſdom as never Man ſpake, ſaw Him Live ſuch Virtue as never Man lived; and Celeſtial Holineſs

(e) Joh. 14. 9.
(f) Joh. 14. 45.
(g) Col. 2. 9.
(h) Matt. 8. 27.
(i) Mar. 7. 37. Act. 10. 38.
(k) Joh. 7. 46.

Holineſs cloathed the Son of Man with Glory. He was thus a Living Law of Virtue, and the ſubſtantial Doctrin of Wiſdom, and a ſenſible manifeſtation of Power; and yet a Man like unto Us in all things, except thoſe excellent Glories, and except our vicious Infirmities. Here then was Human Nature in view, and Human Converſation obſervable: But in all this, a Divine Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Power did appear. Here was the *Life of God* exhibited in the Nature of Men; and the Inviſible Divinity did appear veil'd in the ſenſibleneſs of Humanity. His Converſation was familiar, and yet ſtupendious; and every appearance was Wonderful, but not Terrible. Such a manifeſtation of God there was, as obliged Men to the greateſt Veneration of Him; and what the Son of God did, was moſt God-like. Such an One is He, who is the Supream in the Spiritual Kingdom of God, and none Other was either worthy or fit to be Supream but He, who by his Appearance could ſhew us the Father, and reconcile us unto Him. Men had ſinn'd againſt God, and ſome Atonement was neceſſary for the expiation of Sin, and reconciling of Sinners. This was the common and true Opinion of all Mankind, who were juſtly ſollicitous how God might be appeaſed, and their Pardon be obtained. For this end they at firſt made their Sacrifices of Beaſts; but at length deeming them an inſufficient Oblation, they came to offer Men (*l*). Their Superſtition was a violence to their Nature, and they ſacrificed their Children (*m*), (*i.e.* their own Bowels) to their Idols. This was the Law and the Opinion of the Gentiles; for, as *Plato* ſays, *The Law is the Opinion of the Country* (n): And he adds in the ſame place, That the ſacrificing of Men, was according to the Laws

(*l*) Deorum maximè *Mercurium* colunt, cui certis diebus humanis quoq; hoſtiis litare fas habent. *Tacit.* de mor. *Germ.* *Cæſar.* de bell. *Gall.* l. 1. p. 129.

Euſeb. Orat. in *Conſtat. Tric.* c. 13. *Plin.* Nat. Hiſt. l. 30. c. 1. *Plut.* de defect. Orac.

(*m*) Pſal. 106. 37, 38. (n) Νόμος ὅτι δόγμα πόλεως. *Plato Minos.*

of the *Carthaginians*; it was Legal and Holy among them (*o*). This inhuman and horrid Custom, shews how odious Sin was thought to be in the sight of God; and how difficult it was to appease Him, who was made our Enemy by our Sins. This was the Reason of the Death of Christ, That He might be a Holy Victim offered up to God, as a perfect expiation of the Sins of Men. He gave Himself a *Ransom* for us (*p*), and died to deliver us from Death. Through the power of the same Sacrifice, He also destroyed the Diabolical Superstitions; and saved Men, not only from the Perdition of Hell, but also from the tyranny of Satan upon Earth. Through the virtue of this Death, and the Victory he gained over Death, He *destroyed Him who had the power of Death, that is, the Devil; and delivered them who were all their Lives subject unto bondage* (q). So that by the Appearance, and Doctrin, and Sufferings of the Son of God, Satan's Kingdom was abolished; and (as one Evidence of it) the dead Bones of the Martyr *Babylas*, disabled *Apollo Daphnæus* from giving an Answer to *Julian*, who consulted that Oracle (*r*). Of such Virtue was the Death of Christ. for the good of Men; for their Eternal and Temporal Salvation, from the power and malice of the Devil. After this, the Son of God Incarnate shew'd Himself the Author and Pattern of our Happiness, by his Resurrection and Ascension. He who was the Divine Word, and Power, and Life, could not so yield unto Death as not to be the Conqueror of it; and this He was by Dying, and Rising from the dead. By this Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, Men were led into the prospect of Eternity, and enabled to look beyond the narrow limits of Time. They saw a Life and Death in this World, by Sense; and they saw Life and Immortality in the other World, by Faith. Christians fear

(o) Ὅσιον καὶ νόμιμον ἀνθρώποις. *Plato Mino.*

(p) Ἀντὶ ψυχῶν, i.e. ψυχὴ ἀντὶ ψυχῆς, Life for Life.

(q) Heb 2.25.

(r) *Evagrius*, lib. 1. c. 16. *Socrates*, l. 3. c. 18.

fear only that which is the Second, and Eternal Death: And to avoid that, they take care how they live here; but fear not to die and go from hence. This, which is their Reproach among the Heathen, is their Wiſdom: *While they fear to die after this Death, they do not fear to dye this Death* (s). The ſame Jeſus who had promiſed Life unto Others, by his Reſurrection manifeſted himſelf the Lord of Life (*t*); and no better or greater demonſtration could there be of a future and bleſſed Immortality (*u*). Of Old it had been common among Pagans, to Deifie dead Men (as *Athanaſius* (x) and others tell us); and their Gratitude tranſported them into Idolatry. But He whom we worſhip as the Son of God, dwelt in Human Nature, and was the Son of Man, and ſhew'd by his Reſurrection that his Nature was Divine (*y*). After his Reſurrection He aſcended into Heaven in the Humane Nature, and is Enthroned at the Right Hand of the Majeſty on High; and 'tis in the Power of Him alone to give Salvation unto the Souls of Men, and to beſtow Immortality upon thoſe whom He hath Redeemed. This is the utmoſt Perfection which Human Nature is capable of; and ſuch a State, as even that Nature muſt be improved, that it may be capable of it. But the Son of God, is able to exalt us unto that place and ſtate whither He is gon before Us; and there We ſhall be *for ever with the Lord* (z), and *like unto Him* (a). Thus is the Son of God, the Author and Pattern of the Duty and Happineſs of Men; who was Born, and Lived, and Dy'd, and Roſe again, and Aſcended into Heaven. There all Power is committed unto Him (*b*), and He is the Supream Lord of that Kingdom which is eſtabliſhed by the Goſpel. So Great is the Perſon of our Teacher and Redeemer; and He is no leſs our Only Maſter, than our Only Saviour (*c*). For his Doctrin is

(s) Et dum mori poſt mortem timent interim mori non timent. *Minu. Fe.* p. 26.

(*t*) Joh. 11.25, 26.

(*u*) 2 Tim. 1.10.

(x) *Athanaſius* contra Gentes.

(*y*) Rom. 1.4.

(z) 1 Theſ. 4.17.

(*a*) Phil. 3.21. 1 Joh. 3.2.

(*b*) Mat. 28.18. Phil. 2.6, &c. Heb. 1.4, &c.

(*c*) Θεολόγε σωτῆρος. *Nazianz.* p. 597

the Standard of our Faith, and Himſelf is both the Subject and Author of the Goſpel. To the Conduct of Him we are to give up our ſelves; *And if Chriſt alone be to be heard, we are not to regard what Any before us have thought; but what Chriſt, who was before all, has declared* (d). We are the Servants of Chriſt, and of God; and we muſt follow Him, who is the Son of God, and the Light of the World (e). He is the *Teacher come from God* (f), and was qualified for his Undertaking by, his Nature; and we who hearken unto Him are *all taught of God* (g). He alone is the Great Teacher, who did not learn what He taught; and ſo began to Teach without being firſt a Diſciple (h): And the Reaſon of this is manifeſt from his Nature, foraſmuch as He was the Eternal Son of God. 'Twas in theſe laſt Days, that He was Born; but he is ſuppoſed by the Ancients, long before to have Appear'd, and always to have been the Teacher of Men (i). He manifeſted God unto Men; and of Him it is ſaid by *Irenæus*, *The Father is that which is Inviſible of the Son; and the Son is that which is Viſible of the Father* (k). He is called by *Euſebius*, *The Chief of Philoſophers, and the Teacher of Religious Men* (l). As the Kingdom of God is the Perfection of Religion; ſo He is the Supream Lord of that Kingdom, who is the only Author of that Doctrin, and the Son of God Incarnate. We Chriſtians are not therefore the Diſciples of Men, but of God and his Son; and are Baptized *into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy*

(d) Quare ſi ſolus Chriſtus audiendus eſt, non debemus attendere quid aliquis ante nos faciendum putaverit, ſed, quid, qui ante omnes eſt Chriſtus prior fecerit. *Cyprian.* L. 2. Ep. 3. p. 56. de Hær. Bapt. p. 321. Contra Ep. *Steph.* p. 330.

Non eſt autem de Conſuetudine præſcribendum, ſed ratione Vincendum. *Quir. Fratri*, p. 332. Sententiæ Epiſc. de Hær. bapt. *Coſtus* à *Sicca*, p. 338. *Libоſus* ab *Agra*, p. 339. *Felix* à *Bulacc.* 342.

(e) Joh. 1. 4, 9. 12. 46. 8. 12. 9 5.

(f) Joh. 3. 2.

(g) Iſa. 54. 13. *Lactant.* l. 4. c. 24.

(h) *Ambroſ.* de Offic. l. 1. c. 1.

(i) *Iren.* l. 4. c. 26, 27. *Tertul.* adv. *Herm.* p. 231, 240, 395, 400, 723, 725. *Orig.* l. 6. p. 329. & l. 3. p. 119.

(k) Inviſibile etenim filij Pater, Viſibile autem patris Filius. Lib. 4. c. 14.

(l) Φιλοσόφων ὁ πρώτος, καὶ θεοσεβῶν ἀνδρῶν διδάσκαλος. *Euſeb.* Dem. Evang. l. 3. c. 6.

Holy Ghoſt: And that Initiation obligeth us to *obſerve whatever Chriſt has commanded* (m). His Miniſters did not Baptize into their own Names, but into their Maſters; as S. *Paul*, in the juſtification of Himſelf, ſaid (*), Chriſt had taught them to call no man Father, or (which is the ſame) Maſter, upon Earth; for that, One is their Maſter, even Chriſt; and all they were Brethren. 'Tis not therefore any Perſon, or Number, or Succeſſion of Men; that can preſcribe unto our Faith: There is but *One Lord*, as there is but *One Faith, and One Baptiſm, and One God* (n). We know in whom we believe, and in whom we confide; to whom we ſubject our Conſciences, and from whom we expect our Salvation. 'Tis from that Glorious and Divine Perſon, who is the Son of God; and 'tis from *God manifeſted in the Fleſh* (o). Such is the Perſon; and ſuch is the Glory of the *Supream Lord.*

(m) Matt. 28. 19, 20. V. *Grot.* ad loc. (*) 1 Cor. 1. 14, 15. (n) Eph. 4. 5, 6. (o) 1 Tim. 3. 16.

3. I am to give an Account of the *Office* of his *Inferior Miniſters.*

In the ſame Senſe in which this Order and Succeſſion of Men are Miniſters of Chriſt's Kingdom, they are Teachers of his Religion; and this is the greateſt Honor, ſince the Son of God Himſelf was the *Summus Eccleſiaſtes* (p), the Chief Preacher: And we (according to our ſeveral proportions) are his Servants and Succeſſors in the Office of preaching the Kingdom of God. *We are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech Men by us; we pray them in Chriſt's ſtead, to be reconciled unto God* (q). This Office we are to have in high Eſteem, and to account it our Dignity, that this Miniſtry is committed unto us: For (to uſe the Words of that Book, call'd the Inſtitution of a Chriſtian Man) *ſurely the Office of Preaching is the chief and moſt principal Office, whereunto Prieſts and Biſhops be called by Authority of the Goſpel* (r). This is the Means to lead men.

(p) *Eraſm.* de rat. Concion. l. 1. Matt. 4. 17. (q) 2 Cor. 5. 20. (r) P. 442.

men into all Truth, and to communicate to them the knowledge of Heavenly Wiſdom; to make men Religious, and that is to make them Bleſſed. *The Doctrin of our Religion is delivered in the Goſpel of our Saviour; and the Hiſtory of Chriſt, is the Inſtitution of a Chriſtian.* The Office of the Miniſters of the Goſpel is to teach men the Knowledge, and to conduct them in their Imitation of Chriſt; that by ſuch help Chriſtians may *Learn of Chriſt to Live that they may be Happy.* This is ſuch a Proviſion for the advancement of Wiſdom and Virtue, as never was among any ſort of men, but Jews and Chriſtians; where whole Nations are taught to Live; and no greater Benefactors can there be unto Mankind. S. *Auguſtin* juſtly Objects againſt the Gods of the Heathens, That they never delivered Rules of Living to their Votaries: But on the contrary debauch'd them, by the Immoralities of their Worſhip (*s*). *Let them ſhew* (ſays he) *in what places, Officers were appointed to teach the Precepts of Virtue; and where the People were aſſembled to Learn them, among the Gentiles; as it is in the Churches ordained to this purpoſe, wherever the Chriſtian Religion does obtain* (t). *From the Infernal Yoke and Penal Society of Unclean Powers, men are delivered by the Name of Chriſt; and wicked and ungrateful Men, ſlaves unto the Accurſed Spirit, complain, that others are tranſlated from that Night of pernicious Impiety, unto the Light of Life and Godlineſs: They complain, that Men gather unto our Churches, that they may Learn to Live well here, that they may live happily for ever.* In thoſe places the *Holy Scriptures, the Doctrin of Righteouſneſs ſounds from on high, in the preſence of all; and they that obey, Hear unto Life, and they who obey not, Hear unto Judgment* (u). He that underſtands the Hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt; He that Reverences God and Loves men, muſt

(s) *Aug.* de Civ. D. l. 2. c. 6, 2, 28.

(t) *Aug.* de C.D. l. 2. c. 6.

(u) *Aug.* de C.D. l. 2. c. 28.

muſt magnifie this Office: For by it we are made Wiſe and Holy unto Salvation. *Go teach all Nations, &c.* (x), was the Commiſſion our Lord gave unto his Apoſtles; and in the performance of their Duty, He promiſed to be with them unto the end of the World. The whole of their Office, and of all Eccleſiaſtical Miniſters, is comprehended by the Apoſtle in *Prayer and the Miniſtry of the Word* (y); and to this Office they are ſeparated by their Ordination. *Through this Miniſtration, the Churches of Chriſt, compared with other Aſſemblies of Men, are as the Lights of the World* (z); and according to the ſucceſs of this Work, ſo is the Increaſe of Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs among men. This is a *Rational Service* (a), by which we are the Miniſters of God to men, for their Spiritual and Eternal Good; and by which the Communion between God and Men is maintained. For by Prayer Men make their Addreſſes unto God; and by his Word, God makes his Addreſſes unto Men. By this Sacred Intercourſe Men aſſimulate unto God, and receive Influences from Him; and thus, by the Exerciſes of Religion, they are prepared for the enjoyment of Happineſs. For this end, when the Son of God had fulfilled his Miniſtry, *He aſcended up on High, and led Captivity Captive, and gave Gifts unto Men*; viz. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers: For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt* (b). Some extraordinary, and ſome ordinary Miniſters of Chriſt; and the ſeveral Orders and Degrees of both have been in the Chriſtian Church; as the Records of Ancient Times atteſt, and as the Nature of things does require. Theſe all are *Miniſters by whom we believe, according as God gave unto every man* (c). So far therefore as the Kingdom of

(x) Matt. 28. 19, 20.

(y) Act. 6. 4.

(z) *Origen. cont. Celſ.* l. 3. p. 128.

(a) Rom. 12. 1.

(b) Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12.

(c) 1 Cor. 3. 5.

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(z) Origen. cont. Celſ. l. 3. p. 128.

(a) Rom. 12. 1.

(b) Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12.

(c) 1 Cor. 3. 5.

of God, *i. e.* the Intereſt of True Religion (*for the Kingdom of God is righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt* (d)): So far, I ſay, as True Religion, and the *Power of Godlineſs* (e) does prevail upon the Hearts and Lives of men, and ſo many as thoſe men are upon whom it prevails; ſo far Chriſt's Kingdom is ſet up, and He reigns among men. This is what we are to expect by our Attendance upon the Appointments of God, and putting our ſelves under the conduct of the Guides of Souls. When *Chriſt Lives in us* (f), then are we Subjects of his Spiritual Kingdom; and He is with effect our Lord, and we are in Truth his Servants. Thus is the Son of God Incarnate the only *Supream Lord:* Thus is the Eccleſiaſtical Hierarchy, the *Inferior Miniſters* of his Spiritual Kingdom: And thus are Men, by the power of Godlineſs, Subjects of that Kingdom.

(d) Rom. 14. 17.
(e) 2 Tim. 3. 5.
(f) Gal. 2. 20.

Hitherto I have given an Account, 1. Of the *Nature* of this *Spiritual Kingdom:* 2. Of the *Glory* of its *Supream Lord:* And, 3. of the *Office* of his *Inferior Miniſters.*

The *Application* of what I have ſaid, ſhall be made, 1. To thoſe who are the *Miniſters:* And, 2. To thoſe who are the *Subjects* of this Spiritual Kingdom, of which Chriſt is the Lord.

1. By what I have ſaid, thoſe who have the Honour to be *Miniſters* of the Spiritual Kingdom of Chriſt, are obliged, 1. To be *Faithful* in their Office: And, 2. To be *Humble* towards their Brethren.

1. Thoſe who are *Miniſters* of the Spiritual Kingdom of Chriſt, are obliged to be *Faithful* in their Office.

We are entruſted with the Goſpel of Chriſt, and with the Souls of Men; and we ſenſibly cry out with the Apoſtle, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things* (g)? But *our ſufficiency is of God, who hath made us Able Miniſters*

(g) 2 Cor. 2. 16.

of

of the New Teſtament (h). At the beginning, the Miniſters of the Goſpel were endowed with the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; and performed their Duty by a Wiſdom and Inclination, that they were Inſpired with. But, as We pretend not to ſuch Miraculous Gifts; ſo we are now prepared by the Experience of a Religious Life, and by the Study of Divine Truth. With theſe Advantages we offer our ſelves to Examination, and the Cenſure of thoſe whom God has Appointed to Ordain Miniſters, and to Judge what Perſons are fit for that Office. We do not Intrude our ſelves upon the Sacred Function, without a regular Calling and Approbation; and therefore we humbly expect, that God will Accept and Proſper our Endeavours. We know that Men are to *account of us, as the Miniſters of Chriſt, and the Stewards of the Myſteries of God: Moreover, we know it is required in Stewards, that a Man be found Faithful* (i). We conſider, that we are (according to our proportion) *Watch men unto the Houſe of Iſrael*; and *that if we give not Warning unto the Wicked Man, He ſhall die in his Sin; but his Blood will be required at Our hands: And if we do give Warning to the Wicked, and He turn not, He ſhall die in his Sin, and We have delivered our Souls* (k). Our great Care therefore is, To keep back nothing that is neceſſary or profitable; but to Teach and Inculcate the Duties of *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; that we may be *pure from the Blood of all Men* (l). We are Dignified by our Character; and our Sollicitude is, that we may act ſuitably to it. We are ſenſible what will befall us, If while a Heathen was applauded by Heathens, for doing

(h) 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6.

(i) 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2.

(k) Ezek. 18. 17, 18, 19.

(l) Act. 20. 20, 21, 26.

Honour to a vile Office by his Virtue; we ſhould render a Sacred Office contemptible by our Vice (*m*). I have noted, that our Religion is, by ſome of the Ancients, call'd *Philoſophy*: And we remember, that *ſuch as the Philoſophy is, ſuch ought the Profeſſor of it to be* (n): And *that to aſcend to a higher degree of Dignity, and not to aſcend to a higher degree of Virtue, is to deſcend, and not to aſcend* (o). We ſtudy to Affect our ſelves with the Importance of our Office, that others may be affected by our Exerciſe of it; knowing that none can *ſpeak to the Heart, but from the Heart* (p). We are aware, that 'tis ſufficient Honour to be the *faithful Shepherd of a ſmall Flock*: And *that all Souls are equally precious in the ſight of God*. We are aware that *our Sins, reſt not in our own perſons, but ſpread among the People; and that 'tis not poſſible we ſhould be vicious alone*, as *Iſidore* ſpeaks (*q*). We have a double Care upon us, to be Good Men, and Faithful Guides: For we know well, that *The Eccleſiaſtical Dignity makes not any One a Chriſtian*, as S. *Jerom* ſays*. We feel the burden of the Office that is upon us, and call to mind our great Account; and ſtudy the Converſion, and not the Applauſe of Men. The Sin, and the Impenitency of our Charge, are our ſhame and ſorrow: We mourn over thoſe who choſe Death, and anxiouſly enquire into our ſelves, whether we be not guilty of their Death. This conſideration of our Danger makes us Sigh, and Pray; and we daily recommend them unto the Mercy of God, who are, perhaps,

(m) *Eraſm.* de rat. Concion. l. 1. p. 80.

(n) Qualis eſt Philoſophia, talem decet eſſe Profeſſorem. *Eraſm.* ibid. p. 62, &c.

(o) Aſcendere ad dignitatis gradum, & non aſcendere ad ſublimes Virtutes, deſcendere eſt verius quam aſcendere. Ibid. p. 152.

(p) Nullus autem poteſt loqui ad Cor populi niſi loquatur ex Corde. Id. p. 155.
Ut ridentibus arrident, ſic flentibus adſunt
Humani vultus, ſi vis me flere, dolendum
Primum ipſi tibi tunc tuâ me infortunia lædunt.
Hor. de Art. Poet.

(q) Τὰ ἁμαρτήματα τῶν ἱερωμένων εἰς πάντας ἀφικνεῖται. *Iſid.* Ep. 322.

* Non omnes Epiſcopi Epiſcopi ſunt, non facit Eccleſiaſtica dignitas Chriſtianum. *Hieron.* Ep. 1.

perhaps, our Enemies becauſe we tell them the Truth, and call upon them to Amend. But All that we can do, by a whole Life of Study and Prayer, and Care and Diligence, is, that we may *ſave ſome, and that after we have preached unto others, our ſelves may not be caſt-away* (r). Thus we ſpend our Days, and our Selves, in Fears and Labours; and are tranſported with Joy, when we find we do any good unto thoſe Souls, which are redeem'd by the Blood of the Son of God. If thoſe who belong unto our Charge knew, how much ſollicitude for them fill'd our Hearts; they would almoſt out of Pity to us, Hearken, that their Souls might Live. But *whether Men will Hear, or whether they will forbear* (s), the Obligation abides upon us; and we muſt bear with the Indiſcretion and ill Uſage of the moſt Perverſe, leſt we harden them in Sin, by Ours. Thus we *take heed unto our Selves, and to our Doctrin, and continue in it, that ſo doing we may* (if poſſible) *ſave our ſelves, and thoſe that hear us* (t).

(r) 1 Cor. 9. 27.

(s) Ezek. 2. 5, 7.

(t) 1 Tim 4. 16.

2. We muſt be *Humble* to our Brethren, and look more upon the Labour, than the Dignity of our Vocation; as the Apoſtle did, when he ſaid, we are *your Servants for Jeſus ſake.* Herein we follow too the Example of our Maſter, *who took upon Him the form of a Servant, and came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter* (u). *He preſided with the Power of a Lord; not as over Slaves, but as over Diſciples; and being Gracious and Gentle, He loved them as Brethren,* ſaith *S. Cyprian* (x). This Meekneſs notwithſtanding, muſt not hinder that Severity which Faithfulneſs obliges us to: For we muſt ſometimes *Rebuke ſharply,*

(u) Mat. 20. 28.

(x) Diſcipulis non ut ſervis dominicâ poteſtate præfuit, ſed benignus & mitis fraternâ eos charitate dilexit: *Cyprian.* de bono Patient. p. 199.

when need does require, and when Good can be done thereby. *Like Chirurgeons, who are really most Tender, when they seem most Cruel,* as S. *Jerom* says (y). We cannot perform this Office without Honour; but 'tis not Honour which we seek, in the performance of it; we design the Profit of those we preside over, and value our selves by their Improvement (z). This made the Great Apostle say, *Though I be free from all Men; yet have I made my self Servant unto all, that I might gain the more* (a). 'Tis no Humility in Him who is properly a *Servant*, to Act as such, or to suffer himself to be used as such by his Master: But where Mens *Education* and *Office* are a Dignity, 'tis a voluntary and Christian Abasement, to do and suffer any thing, that They may be Useful: Such an *Education* is necessary to Us, who Minister about Holy Things: And while any sort of Learning is thought considerable, Ours will be so. Our *Office* is like unto our Education; and that under a double consideration, as *Human*, and as *Divine*. If it were no other than a *Human* Institution; yet were it an Honourable Employment, to teach Men Wisdom and Virtue: And so long as those Perfections of Men are had in just Esteem, our Office cannot be despised. But our Office is not only Excellent, but also *Sacred*; and in this performance We are the Immediate Servants of the Most High God and our Saviour. Whosoever therefore has any Reverence for Religion, must own, that there is no small degree of it due to the Ministers of Religion: And if *God* be Venerable, it cannot but be a high Honour

(y) Putridæ carnes ferro indigent & cauterio, nec est medicinæ culpa sed vulneris: Cum clementi crudelitate non parcit medicus, ut parcat sævit, ut misereatur. *Hieron.* Ep. 147.

(z) Ecclesia mihi credita, cujus utilitatibus servio, cui non tam præesse quam prodesse desidero. *Aug.* Ep. 160.

(a) 1 Cor. 9. 19.

Honour to be his *Prieſts* (b). We are therefore advanced by our Character, that we may deſcend by our Humility; and *He that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted* (c). We have this Obligation, and Encouragement, and Neceſſity, for Abaſing our ſelves in doing good unto the Souls of Men: And if we ſhould be ill uſed, we muſt *not render Evil for Evil, but remember the Example of our Lord Jeſus, who endured the contradiction of Sinners againſt Himſelf; who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He ſuffered, He threatned not* (d). Thoſe very Perſons who ſcorn, or hate us, are part of thoſe whoſe Souls we are charged with; and we muſt upon peril of our Souls, Diſcharge our ſelves. Let us therefore Mourn for thoſe who ſin, and Pity thoſe who are miſerable: Let us remember they are our Brethren by Nature and Religion, and let us ſtoop to any thing, that they may come to Repentance, and be ſaved. *Chriſt humbled Himſelf unto the death, even the death of the Croſs*; and We imitate Him but very faintly, when we willingly ſuffer any Indignity, purſuant of his Deſign, *to ſave a Soul from death* (e).

(b) 1 Sam. 9. 6.

(c) Luc. 14. 11. 18. 14.

(d) Heb. 12. 3. 1 Pet. 2. 23.

(e) Jam. 5. 19, 20.

Thus the Doctrin of the Text may be applied unto the *Miniſters* of Chriſt's Spiritual Kingdom; for the perſuading them, 1. To be *Faithful* in their Office; and, 2. *Humble* towards their Brethren.

Secondly, This Doctrin may be applied to the *Subjects* of this Kingdom; for the perſuading them, 1. To *Reverence* their *Guides*: And, 2. *Live* their *Religion*.

1. The

1. The *Subjects* of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom, *i.e.* the Professors of his Religion must be perſuaded, to *Reverence* the *Guides* of their Souls. As there is a God, to whom our Services are due, and upon whom our Intereſt depends; ſo is it neceſſary we ſhould Worſhip that God, and be Inſtructed how we may be in Favour with Him. There muſt therefore be ſuch as Miniſter about Holy Things; and, the reaſon of all Mankind hath taught them, That ſuch Perſons are neceſſary and venerable. *Ariſtotle*, in his *Politicks* enquires, how many things there are, without which a Nation cannot ſubſiſt; among others, he ſays, The Fifth and Chief thing is, *The Care of Holy Things, which is call'd Prieſthood* (f). The Deſignation of ſuch (he ſays) is manifeſt, *That no Plowman, or Artificer, ought to be a Prieſt; becauſe the Gods ought to be Honoured by the Nation* (g). The Office is ſacred, and the Perſons ought to be ſo; and care muſt be taken, that God may be honoured by the choice of his Miniſters. The Firſt Precept of thoſe golden Verſes aſcribed to *Pythagoras*, is to *Honour the Gods, according to their Natures* (h). In order unto that, ſays *Hierocles*, a Prieſt is neceſſary; becauſe he is ſuppoſed to have an Underſtanding and a Temper fit for it: *He only is Wiſe, He only is Acceptable to the Gods, He only knows how to pray* (i). So he. And thus much is unqueſtionably true, That 'tis the greateſt Intereſt of Men, to ſecure the Favour of God; and that thoſe who have ſtudied the Nature of Religion, are beſt able to direct Men how to do this. But 'tis the duty of the Miniſters of Religion, to Underſtand, and

(f) Πέμπτον δὲ καὶ πασῶν τὴν περὶ τὸ θεῖον ἐπιμέλειαν, ἣν καλοῦσιν ἱερωσύνην. *Ariſt.* Pol. l. 7. §. 41.

(g) Id. §. 43.

(h) Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεοὺς νόμῳ ὡς διάκεινται τίμα.

(i) Μόνος ἱερεὺς ὁ σοφὸς λέγεται μόνος θεοφιλὴς, μόνος εἰδὼς εὔχεσθαι. *Hieroc.* p. 25.

and Teach, and Exemplifie it (*k*); and from them Men can moſt advantagiouſly be informed. As every Inſtitution of Virtue and Wiſdom is Divine, (as *Plutarch* notes (*l*);) ſo the Inſtitution of Religious Virtue and Wiſdom is moſt Divine. This is, in an eminent ſenſe, Eternal and Divine; and the Advantage of it is Great and Everlaſting. Nothing elſe is ſo conſiderable as this; and this a Man cannot be deprived of. A mans Learning and Religion will abide with him, when all other things fail; and no Adverſary can take them away from him. Some things are conſumed by Time, and others by Uſe; but Piety is improved by Exerciſe and Continuance. This Benefit we receive from the Miniſters of the Goſpel, and Gratitude obliges us to a reſpect for them. The Office is neither unneceſſary or unprofitable, as ſome Enemies of Religion pretend: But as *Fools only hate knowledge* (m); ſo Irreligious perſons only hate the Miniſters of Religion (*n*). All others find by Experience, how much they owe unto their Labours; and reverence thoſe as Guardian-Angels, who watch for their Souls (*o*). *Of Old, when Zeal for Chriſtianity was high, the Veneration of Biſhops was ſo too: They were not only eſteemed among the People, but among Princes, and almoſt adored. Witneſs the Caſe of the Emperour* Theodoſius, *who ſubmitted to the Cenſure of S.* Ambroſe; *and that Authority the Biſhop obtained by being a Biſhop indeed* (p). The Duty of a Miniſter of Chriſt, conciliates a reſpect to Him, among all who who honour God and Religion; and nothing can diminiſh ſuch an One among wiſe and good

(*k*) V. Collect. de Ordin. of Biſh. Pr. and Deac.

(*l*) *Plut.* de lib. Educ. Παιδεία δὲ τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν μόνον ἔστιν ἀδύνατον καὶ θεῖον.

(m) Pro. 1. 22.

(*n*) Jo. 3. 22.

(*o*) Rev. 2. 2, 8.

(p) *Eraſm.* de rat. Conc. l. 1. p. 123. Τὸ μὲν τῆς Ἐπισκοπῆς, καὶ ὄνομα, καὶ πρᾶγμα θεῖον ὄν. *Iſid.* Ep. 127.

good Men, but his doing what is contrary to his Character (q). But *the Cheerfulneſs and Alacrity with which a Miniſter of Chriſt is to perform his Office, has a dependance upon the Peoples performing their Duty; and if the People ſhew themſelves ſincerely Teachable, God will not ſuffer them to want Faithful Teachers: And it comes to paſs often, for the Sins of the People, That inſtead of a King, God ſends them a Tyrant; and inſtead of a Shepherd, He ſends them a Wolf* (r). Before therefore Chriſtians break forth into Contempt and Indignation againſt their Teachers, they ſhould do well ſtrictly to examin themſelves, and ſee if ſome Sin of theirs, in deſpiſing a Faithful Guide, or being Obſtinate againſt his good Counſel; has not provoked God, to puniſh them with a blind and vicious One. We Miniſters are no more than *Men, of like Paſſions* (s) and Infirmities with others: But our Office is Divine, and our Labour difficult, and our Account ſevere: Therefore the People committed to our Charge, ought to Excuſe the defects of our Nature; to pray for the Succeſs of our Miniſtry; and to Reverence the Character of the Servants of the Moſt High God. *Jamblicus* tells us, That *there is a double perſon in a Prieſt; one Human, which He has from Nature; and the other Divine, which He has from his Conſecration* (t). After him, *Iſidore* ſays much the ſame thing, *That Prieſthood is a Medium between the Divine and Human Nature* (u). Upon this account the Apoſtle ſays, *We beſeech you Brethren, to know them which Labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and Admoniſh you; and to eſteem them very highly in Love for their Works ſake; and*

(q) *Eraſm.* de rat. Conc. l. 1. p. 164, &c. & p. 73.

(r) *Eraſm.* p. 177, 178. Vid. Conſecrat. of Biſhops.

(s) Act. 14. 15.

(t) *Jamb.* de Myſt.

(u) Τῆς θείας καὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ἱερωσύνη ὥσπερ μέση κατέστηκεν. *Iſid.* Ep. 20.

to

to be at Peace among your ſelves (x). For ſuch Addreſs themſelves to Men, in the Name, and by the Command of Chriſt; and Chriſt conſiders their Uſage, and his own. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me,* (ſays our Saviour) *and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that ſent me* (y): *And he that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, ſhall receive a Prophets reward.* On the contrary, *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth Me; and he that deſpiſeth Me, deſpiſeth Him that ſent Me* (z). The Contempt of the Miniſters of Chriſt, is the Contempt of Chriſt and of God; and ſure God will vindicate His own Honour, and the Honour of his Faithful Servants. Therefore let all Profane Perſons conſider in time; ſince the Contempt of their Spiritual Guides will prove their Eternal confuſion, if they do not Repent. 'Tis a dangerous ſign, that ſuch have no True Religion, who ſcorn and malign the Miniſters of it; and he muſt be Profane, who has no Reverence for Perſons who are Sacred. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves. For they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: For that is unprofitable for you* (a). It is a grief and diſcouragement, when a Miniſter of Chriſt, obſerves ſuch an Enmity againſt Religion; but 'tis Deſtruction to thoſe in whom that Enmity is, if they do not Repent. Let ſuch therefore know, That to ſcorn and malign thoſe whoſe peculiar and diſtinctive Character it is, that they belong to God; is to oppoſe God Himſelf. That to have no Reſpect and Reverence for the Meſſengers of God, is a Neglect of Him. 'Tis not therefore for our own ſakes, but for yours, that we ſay ſuch things as theſe. For we know our Character

(x) 1 Theſ. 5. 20.

(y) Matt. 10. 40.

(z) Luc. 10. 16.

(a) Hebr. 13. 17.

is Sacred, and that All who are Wiſe and Religious count it ſo. We know alſo, that God is intereſted in the Honour of his Immediate Servants, and that he takes care of thoſe who are Faithful to Him. But we dare not be guilty of ſuch vicious Modeſty, as wholly to forbear reminding Chriſtians, what Reverence is due to their Spiritual Guide; becauſe that Reverence is fundamentally neceſſary to Chriſtians profiting by them, and the want of that Reverence, is a fatal Sign, that their Miniſtry has no effect on ſuch Men. In ſhort, *We are unto God, a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. To the one we are the ſavour of Death unto Death, and to the other we are the ſavour of Life unto Life.* So we are, if we *do not corrupt the Word of God; but as of ſincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God we ſpeak in Chriſt* (b). Therefore no Caſe can be more dangerous than that of thoſe Men, who have a Faithful Miniſter of Chriſt, watching for their Souls; and who do not ſubmit to their Conduct, or Reverence their Function. This is the Reaſon which moves and conſtrains us, to magnifie our Office; And may what is ſaid, be candidly underſtood, and ſeriouſly conſidered.

(b) 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16, 17.

Thus muſt Chriſtians *Reverence* their *Miniſters*: And,

2. They muſt *Live* their *Religion*.

This may juſtly be inferred from the foregoing Diſcourſe; in which, the Nature of Chriſt's Spiritual Kingdom, and the Glories of Him our Supream Lord, and the Office of his Inferior Miniſters have been accounted for. A Chriſtian profeſſes the Religion of Chriſtian, and pretends to belong unto the Kingdom of God: He is under the Obligations of a Diſciple

and

and Subject. A Christians Duty is the Study of Wisdom, and the Practice of Goodness, by the History of Jesus Christ; Learning his Doctrin, and Imitating his Example. That Wisdom is such as may influence us to, and direct us in the practice of Goodness; and that Goodness is such, as the Son of God was the Pattern of, who is the Consubstantial Reason of the Father. Without that Wisdom, there can be no Virtue: For as Wisdom separated from Goodness, turns Enthusiasm; so Goodness separated from Wisdom, turns Superstition. There is no true Holiness without great Understanding, and an Unlearned is an Ungodly life (c). The Life of Man is the Matter of Virtue, and he who Lives wisely, Lives religiously. He does not live like a Man, who does not, in some sort, Live like a Christian; and a Rational, is a Divine Conversation. Religion is a practical Institution; the True Art of Living well and happily: *For Virtue is the Art of Living in which all Action is contained*, says *Philo* (d). Reason and Religion are of the same Original, and Nature; and what is *Irrational* is *Irreligious* (e), As *Philo* said of the Jewish Virtue, so *Justin M.* said of Christian Piety, it consists not in *Words, but Deeds* (f). No man must pretend to a Practical Institution, and not practise by it: All such Pretences are so grosly false, that they are very ridiculous. But as the Christian Institution is the Perfection of Religion, and that Religion is a Divine Life (g); so the Conversation of a Christian, must excel in Virtue. *Except our Righteousness*

(c) Si verum fateri volumus, nulla est sancta rusticitas sicut nulla est rusticana sanctitas; ubicunque est vera Sanctitas ibi est magna Philosophia, miniméque vulgaris Eruditio. *Erasm.* de rat. Conc. l. 1. p. 46.

(d) Ὅλου γὰρ τοῦ βίου ἐστὶ τέχνη ἡ ἀρετὴ ἐν ᾧ καὶ αἱ συμπάσαι πράξεις. *Philo* de Leg. l. 1. p. 80.

(e) Ἀλόγιστος γὰρ ὁ μὴ ἅγιος τρόπος. *Philo*, ibid p. 43.

(f) *Justin M.* ad Gr p. 33.

(g) The Life of God, Eph. 4. 18.

teouſneſs exceeds the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees (*i. e.* the moſt celebrated among the Jews,) *we can in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* (h). We cannot be happy in the other World; nor Religious in this. S. *Cyprian* in his Tract concerning Patience, gives this Character of Chriſtians; *We Brethren, are they, who are Philoſophers, not in Words but in Deeds; who do not pretend wiſdom in Habit, but in Truth; who know rather the Conſcience, than the Boaſt of Virtue: Who do not Speak, but Live great things, as the Servants and Worſhippers of God* (i). 'Tis not in Speculation, but in Practice; 'tis not in ſome ſingle Acts, but in a courſe of Life, that Chriſtianity does conſiſt (*k*). *Job* gives the deſcription of True Wiſdom, and repreſents it as coming from God: *And unto Man he ſaid; Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wiſdom; and to depart from Evil, is Underſtanding* (l). *Thus we muſt be Wiſe in this Life, or we muſt be Miſerable in the next. For we have not another Life afforded us, that we may ſeek Wiſdom in this, and be Wiſe in that: 'Tis neceſſary we ſhould do both in this* (m). This is the great Deſign of the Goſpel, which is called the Grace of God; and that Grace is ſaving, as it teaches this. *The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men; teaching us, that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World: Looking for the Bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; who gave Himſelf for us, that He might redeem*

(h) Matt. 5. 20.

(i) Nos autem fratres chariſſimi, qui Philoſophi, non verbis ſed factis ſumus, nec veſtitu ſapientiam, ſed veritate præferimus, qui Virtutum magis Conſcientiam quàm jactantiam novimus, qui non loquimur magna ſed vivimus, quaſi ſervi & cultores Dei. *Cyprian.* de Patient.

(*k*) 1 Pet. 1. 15.

(l) Job 28. 28.

(m) Non enim nobis altera vita conceditur, ut cum quæramus in hâc, ſapientiam, in illâ ſapere poſſimus: In hâc utrumque fieri neceſſe eſt. *Lactant.* l. 3. c. 16.

redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto Himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works (n). This is the Design of our Lord, and this is the Duty of his Disciples: And to this End, the Performances of his Ministers tend; and agreeable is their Obligation. *I charge thee* (says S. *Paul* to *Timothy*) *therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his Appearing and his Kingdom; Preach the Word, be instant, in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrin* (o). The Kingdom of God signifies that state Eminently, which shall be at the Resurrection of the Dead (*p*). Then *they that sleep in the Dust of the Earth, shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt: And they that be Wise, shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many unto righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever* (q). Let all then who are Christians, *Take heed unto themselves.* And let us who are Ministers *take heed unto our selves, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made us Overseers; to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with his own Blood; That when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, we may receive that Crown of Glory that fadeth not away* (s). And, *O Lord God, keep this for ever in the Imagination of the thoughts of the Heart of Us thy Servants, and prepare our Hearts unto thee* (t).

(n) Ἵνα λύσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας. Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14.

(o) 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2.

(p) Vid. *Grot.* ad Matt. 5. 19. & 16. 28.

(q) Dan. 12. 2, 3.

(r) Hebr. 2. 1, 2, 3.

(t) 1 Chron. 29. 18.

Almighty

ALmighty God, the Giver of all good Gifts, who of thy Divine Providence haſt appointed divers Orders in thy Church: Give thy Grace, we humbly beſeech thee, to all thoſe, who are called to any Office and Adminiſtration in the ſame; and ſo repleniſh them with the Truth of thy Doctrin, and endue them with Innocency of Life, That they may faithfully ſerve before Thee, to the glory of thy great Name, and the benefit of thy Holy Church, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

FINIS.